

Phillip J. Moore
City Manager
City of Alma
July 13, 2011

1. **We support Public Act 88 of 1913.** Please oppose Senate Bill 395.
2. **Economic Development cooperation is key to other collaboration.** Having a countywide economic development program has been instrumental in getting the all the municipal governments to work together. Greater Gratiot Development, Inc. has been able to tell cities, villages, and townships when our artificial barriers were making it difficult for business attraction.
3. **Fairness in funding is important.** It is difficult to develop a fair formula for cities, townships, villages and the country. We all recognize that development in other parts of the county help us but fairness is foundation of cooperation. A countywide millage was viewed by all parties as the fairest way to handle funding.
4. **Economic Development is important but not mandated which means it is hard to keep a stable funding source.** It is hard to keep funding for non-mandated services when revenues keep decreasing. Having a dedicated millage protects the funding for an item that is ranked as top priority of the community. Prior to the millage, the funding for economic develop was constantly under assault by communities with limited budgets.
5. **Attracting development is difficult.** The community must help walk the developer through the process. Many steps such as Brownfields and zoning are complex for both the developer and the municipality. Success means providing developers and even municipalities with assistance.
6. **Gratiot County had a very open process.** During our countywide master planning effort, we established economic development as one of our prioritized goals. The discussions prior to implementation of Public Act 88 of 1913 took almost a year. There were many newspaper articles about the discussions. All the cities and many of the townships passed resolutions of support for the funding method prior to the county board of commissioners taking action.
7. **City of Alma received no complaints from taxpayers.** During the past year, when we collected the property taxes we received no complaints about the millage. For the average homeowner in Alma, the cost of the millage was less than \$1 per month.
8. **Small cities cannot afford to staff their own economic development office.** Budgets for cities and townships keep getting smaller. With tight budgets, it would be very difficult for smaller cities to fund their own economic development office. By collaborating, we can afford an office staffed by a professional that understands the needs of developers.
9. **It has worked well in Gratiot County.** The funding from PA88 of 1913 has been viewed as a very successful means of funding an important priority of the community. It has provided an equitable means of allocating the cost of economic development.
10. **Please oppose Senate Bill 395.**